

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, CA

SUBJ: OUTLOOK FOR OCTOBER 14 LABOR PROTEST

DEMONSTRATION

REF: OTTAWA 3264; 3290

1. IN WAKE OF PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S EXPECTED REFUSAL (DURING AUG 6 MEETING WITH CLC) TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO AN EARLY TERMINATION DATE FOR ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS DECIDED AUG 12 TO CARRY OUT MANDATE GIVEN BY ITS MAY CONVENTION TO CONDUCT NATIONWIDE PROTEST AGAINST WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS ON OCT. 14. IN RECENT DAYS CLC HEADQUARTERS INITIATED A MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL AND COORDINATING EFFORT THROUGHOUT CANADA TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT ON PART OF AFFILIATED UNIONS AND DISTRICT LABOR COUNCILS, THE LATTER SERVING AS LOCAL COORDINATORS.

2. IN ORDER TO ATTRACT NON-LABOR GROUPS AND TO MINIMIZE CLC RESPONSIBILITY FOR PENALTIES AGAINST WORKERS GOING ON STRIKE ILLEGALLY, CLC IS LEAVING IT UP TO SUBORDINATE AND AFFILIATED BODIES WHETHER TO CONDUCT WORK

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STOPPAGES OR ONLY RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS OUTSIDE

WORKING HOURS. REGARDLESS OF FORM THE PROTESTS WILL TAKE IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR CLC TO RETAIN NEWLY-WON CREDIBILITY AS POLITICALLY POWERFUL ORGANIZATION WORTHY OF ACHIEVING ITS LONGER RANGE OBJECTIVE OF EQUAL PARTNER STATUS WITH GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DECISION MAKING. CLC WILL USE DAY OF PROTEST (VIRTUALLY IMPOSED BY CLC'S MAY CONVENTION) AS TACTICAL VEHICLE TO CONDEMN ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. CLC'S ULTIMATE AIM IS TO PORTRAY ITS REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER AMONG CANADIAN WORKERS BY MOUNTING THIS MOST AMBITIOUS AND MASSIVE EFFORT IN MODERN LABOR HISTORY.

3. SUPPORT FOR PROTEST IS SO FAR EVIDENT AMONG MAJORITY OF CLC AFFILIATES BUT THERE ARE IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS. IN PUBLIC SECTOR THE LARGEST CLC AFFILIATE, CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (MUNICIPAL), IS STAUNCHEST ADVOCATE. NEWLY FORMED NATIONAL UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES WHOSE MEMBERSHIP IS LIMITED TO B.C., ALBERTA, SASKATCHEWAN, MANITOBA AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ALSO SUPPORTS PROTEST BUT MAJOR FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE UNION, PUBLIC SERVICE ALIANCE (177,000 MEMBERS), DOES NOT. POSTAL CLERKS AND LETTER CARRIERS OPTED TO JOIN PROTEST. IN PRIVATE SECTOR UAW WAS IN FOREGROUND CALLING FOR 1-DAY GENERAL STRIKE AND HOPES TO SHUT DOWN AUTO MANUFACTURING ON OCTOBER 14. OTHER LARGE UNIONS SUCH AS STEELWORKERS, IAM, IUE AND COMMUNIST-ORIENTED UE HAVE COMMITTED THEIR ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE. LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND SEVERAL NON-OPERATING UNIONS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE CITING RECENT CONCLUSION OF TWO-YEAR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT WITHIN WAGE GUIDELINES. IN VIEW OF POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES CLC HAS ASKED AUTOMONY-MINDED QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOR (NOT DISTRICT COUNCILS) TO COORDINATE PROTEST. QFL'S RIVAL ORGANIZATIONS, CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS, WILL JOIN IN PROTEST. AMONG ORGANIZATIONS NOT AFFILIATED TO CLC, CALPA (PILOTS) AND CATCA (CONTROLLERS) ARE NOT SUPPORTING PROTEST. ONTARIO TEACHERS FEDERATION COUNSELED MEMBERS AGAINST WORKSTOPPAGE BUT ENCOURAGED PARTICIPATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS, WHILE ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION LEADERS RECOMMENDED WORK-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STOPPAGE TO ITS MEMBERS.

4. DESPITE ACCUSATIONS BY CLC PRESIDENT MORRIS THAT LABOR MINISTER MUNRO IS INCITING EMPLOYERS TO TAKE PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST POTENTIAL STRIKERS, GOC IS STEERING CLEAR OF OPEN CONFRONTATION IN HOPES THAT CLC WILL NOT SUFFER UNDUE LOSS OF PRESTIGE BY MINIMAL WORKER RESPONSE WHILE AT SAME TIME INSISTING THAT PROTEST ACTIONS

TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE OF WORKING HOURS. ALTHOUGH DISAGREEING WITH CLC THAT LABOR HAS BEEN UNFAIRLY TREATED UNDER ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM MUNRO REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PROTEST WILL BE SUCCESS AS "LEGITIMATE EXERCISE IN TERMS OF DISSENT" SO THAT "GOVERNMENT, LABOR AND BUSINESS CAN WORK TOGETHER AFTER IT IS OVER."

5. CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER CLARK HAS PLACED BLAME FOR DAY OF PROTEST ON GOC'S SHOULDERS, ARGUING THAT ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WITH CLC PRIOR TO INTRODUCTION OF CONTROLS COULD HAVE AVOIDED LABOR'S DECISION TO DRAMATIZE ITS OPPOSITION TO ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. AS EXPECTED, NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY, WHICH OPPOSED CONTROL LEGISLATION IN PARLIAMENT, IS FULLY BEHIND LABOR'S RESORT TO PROTEST ACTION.
ENDERS

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